



## West Virginia Governor's Veterans Council

### MEETING MINUTES

September 27, 2013

*The second meeting of fiscal year 2014 was held on September 27, 2013, in the Governor's Cabinet and Conference Room at the WV State Capitol in Charleston, WV. Following are the minutes from that meeting:*

- Meeting called to order by Chairman Bare.
- Seven members were present – enough members in attendance for a quorum.
- Those present were: Mr. Randall Bare, Mr. James DeCarlo, Mr. Miles Epling, Mr. Cedric Greene, Mr. William “Bill” Harris, Mr. James McCormick, and Mr. Woody Williams.
- Motion made to dispense of the reading of the minutes from the last meeting. Motion seconded and carried.

#### **BRIEF BY SECRETARY THOMPSON**

##### **Nursing Wages**

- Secretary Thompson explained that he is attempting to obtain an exception to the salary increase freeze for registered nurses, LPNs and health service workers at the West Virginia Veterans Nursing Facility. At the current rate, the facility cannot compete with private sector and/or federal pay rates.

##### **Question from Audience**

- “How large is the waiting list for the Nursing Home, and do you have beds for all of those?”
- Secretary Thompson responded that it is a 120-bed facility and that in order to fill every bed, staffing levels must be able to support the needs of 120 residents. He went on to say that they have been adding 2-3 residents per week and the goal is to be at 100% capacity soon.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Monument to Honor Underage Veterans**

- Chairman Bare brought up discussion that had been tabled at the previous meeting regarding the underage veterans monument and whether or not verbiage explaining the meaning of the monument should be inscribed directly on it, or if pamphlets should be used to inform the public of its meaning.

- Mr. Epling made the motion to emplace the monument for the time being and work on the wording afterward.
- Mr. DeCarlo seconded.
- Mr. McCormick voiced concerns shared with him by retired Colonel Ralph Kelly that the monument seems to encourage lying to enter the service.
- Chairman Bare moved forward with the voting on the motion and the motion carried.

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKERS**

### **Ms. Carolyn Stuart – Executive Director of the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs**

- Ms. Stuart briefly requested that the Committee consider forming a sub-committee of Minority Affairs so that all veterans feel that they are completely included and have a voice.

### **Ms. Nikki Orcutt – Marketing Director, WV Lottery Commission**

- Ms. Orcutt discussed the matter of generating revenue via the *Veteran's Cash* scratch-off lottery tickets.
- She explained that revenue was declining over the past fiscal year and the plan to remedy the situation was to start a new \$2.00 ticket to be sold at all licensed lottery retail locations.
- She went on to state that as of recently with this new plan implemented, they have already seen better numbers than compared to the first 8 months of the last fiscal year.
- She also informed the council that the commission also signed off on an advertising buy for \$125,000.

### **Shawn McClain – Management Analyst, VA Regional Office**

- Provided an update on number of backlog cases.
- Down to 1,400 with the goal of having zero by the end of the month.
- Progress becoming very promising: 5,500 claims in electronic format in Huntington claims office and 56% of inventory in electronic binding.

### **Chairman Bare introduced new member, James McCormick to the council**

- Mr. McCormick touched on several topics including:
  - Hunting and Fishing License Regulation
  - Compatibility of homeless veterans in certain homeless shelters
  - Full support of the Van Driver Program becoming a grant program
  - Alleviating confusion between State and Federal veteran programs

## **COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE**

### **Meg Cianfrocca (Rockefeller)**

- Made announcement that Senator Rockefeller will be attending possibly his last *Take a Veteran to School Event* on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at Parkersburg High School at 1:00 PM.

**Jarod Towner, Chairman – WV Veterans Coalition**

- Mr. Towner asked a question regarding the progress of the Veterans Courts around the state and how we could further assist veterans whose problems could be stemming from events that took place during their service.
- Secretary Thompson stated that before any expansion can be made that the WV Supreme Court would have to approve it.
- Mr. Epling stated that as a County Commissioner, the court systems are already depleted of money and adding another court to the system would not be financially possible.
- Mr. Thompson stated again that it should be brought to the attention of the Supreme Court because it is within their financial means.

**Larry McNealy – ESGR Employment Specialist**

- Mr. McNealy reminded the council of his organization Employee Support of Guard and Reserve, which helps find jobs for Guardsman, Reservists and Veterans

**Skip Gebhart – Higher Ed**

- Informed the council that almost all state schools have a designated veterans advocate (contact point for veterans).
- Also signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Higher Ed Policy Commission, WVDVA and Council for Community and Technical College Education with a goal of improving outreach to WV students who are eligible for GI Bill Benefits.

**Chairman Bare requested motion to close meeting, Miles Epling made motion, seconded by Mr. Harris – voted on.**

**Meeting Adjourned**